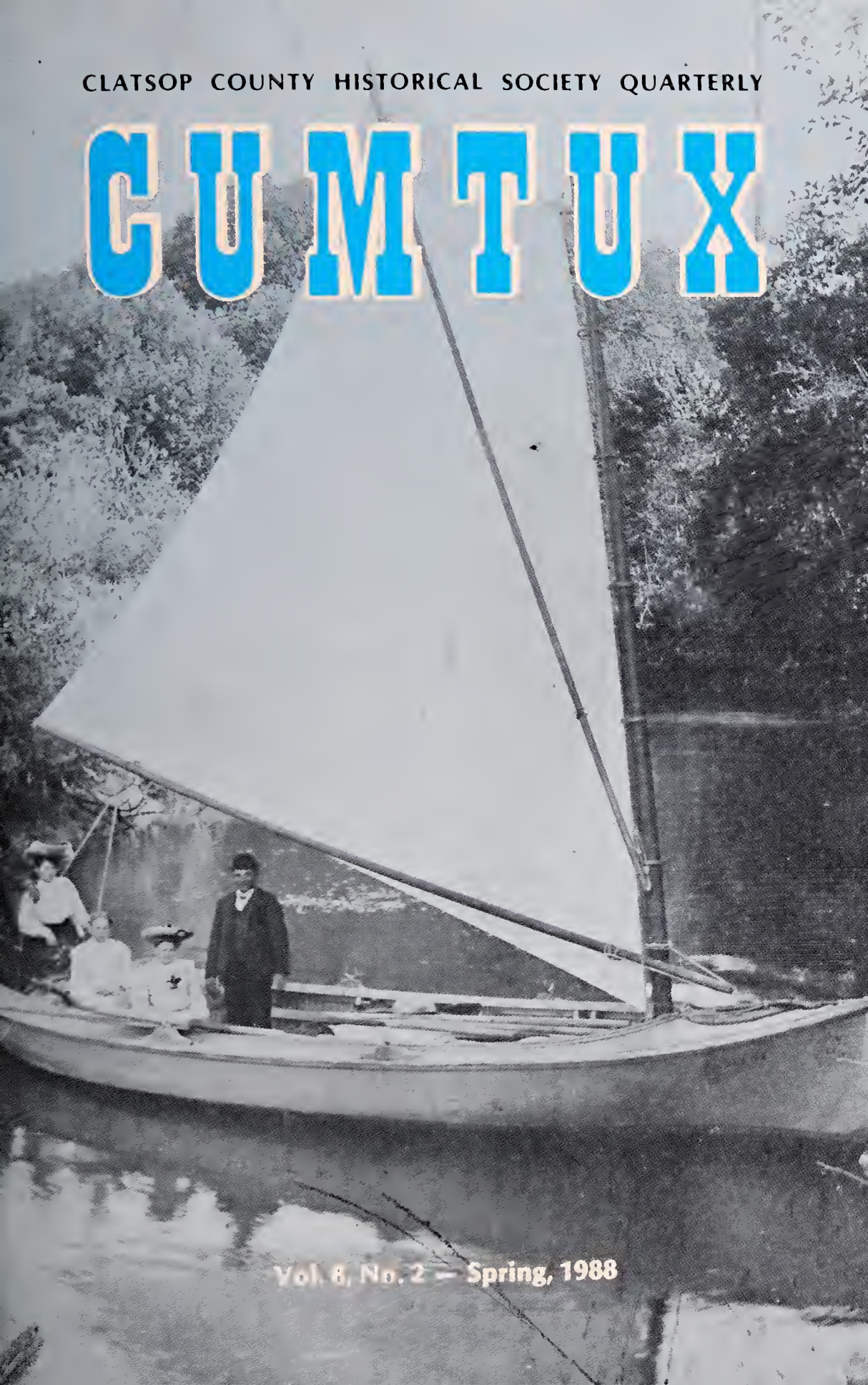


CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

CUMTUX



Vol. 8, No. 2 — Spring, 1988



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CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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A pleasing continuation of a happy childhood and remembered friends on both sides of the Columbia River.

21 CLATSOP'S PAST

A copy of an original Bulletin by Evening Budget Staff working out of a makeshift office after the newspaper building was destroyed in the Astoria Fire of December, 1922.

23 ASTORIA'S "UNION FISH"

We will remember along with the Author, though the cannery building is demolished, the great days of The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company and its Founders.

COVER: (L to R) Anton and Signey Josephson, Signey's sisters, Alma Soderberg and Mary Garrits, and an unknown gentleman, enjoy an excursion aboard the Josephson's "Butterfly" sail trawler in early Astoria.

INSIDE FRONT COVER: These Astoria students of McClure School, located then at Eighth and Franklin Streets are marked, (top) fourth grade, (middle) eighth grade and (bottom) Commercial class of the Astoria High School which was on the top floor of the McClure School. Can any of our readers help to identify any students or teachers in the photo? There was no date on any photo. (Davis Photo for CCHS.)

CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:

"To know . . . acknowledge . . . to inform."

The Means and the Meaning

THE NATURAL resources that once drew migrants to this region are now largely depleted or exhausted. Furs, fish, farms, and timber no longer promise a horn of plenty. These resources which once provided the means for a burgeoning population are now largely iridescent historical phenomena that have faltered or failed.

But the land, and the ocean, and the great river Columbia remain — and people remain with their memories of a past that had promised so much. Today Astoria's population is smaller than it once was, which is true for Clatsop County as a whole. But still people persist here, even though the earlier means that formerly supported a sizeable population have largely passed away. To be sure, substitutes have replaced the earlier means, at least in part, i.e. government jobs at the national, state, county and city levels; the U.S. Coast Guard Station, by shops, stores, restaurants, schools, small businesses, etc., etc. Nevertheless, the original pull factors (the earlier means, that once exercised a compelling attraction in luring settlers here from virtually the far corners of the earth no longer beckon. But people have remained here, some return here, and still fewer move here for the first time in their lives.

Those who remain do so because they feel a deep sense of belonging — here! Those who return do so for the same reason. It's all part of a metaphysical magic we can best describe as an emotional commitment. It's a matter not of the head, but of the heart. If this town and county could write its autobiography it would no doubt point out that



Dr. Burton J. Williams, Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of History from Central Washington University at Ellensburg, is now Executive Director for C.C.H.S. (Photo courtesy CCHS.)

people stay here and return here because this place has an emotional meaning which overshadows in importance the means or the opportunities this place provides.

Every place on this planet has real meaning to its inhabitants in direct proportion to the peoples' roots in the history of those places where they live. Meaning then, is derived from the past — from our individual and collective histories of attachment to place. Your CCHS adds immensely to the meaning that this particular place has for those who live here. The CCHS is not, in the conventional use of that term, simply a county historical society with narrow, antiquarian interests. Your historical society plays a crucial role in preserving and presenting the past of this place and

its people which in turn defines and gives meaning, not only to its residents, but to all those we touch. And, it is appropriate for me to point out at this time that the CCHS is far richer in meaning than it is in the means to do its job the way we should and want to do that job. But because we do provide meaning, I am confident that you and I will find the means to go on providing meaning.

Permit me to speak for a moment about the present meaning of this place, and the present means it provides. Both the present meaning and the means have deep roots in the past. Among its current means, or resources, this place has the richest and oldest history in the American Northwest. I am fond of saying that this community and county is "where it all started." Or, to declare that this place is the Jamestown of the Pacific Northwest. Lewis and Clark were here during the winter of 1805-06; Astoria was founded by John Jacob Astor in 1811. This relatively long history of an American presence here helped to establish what I term emotional ownership of the land before it was actually ours. (It did not become ours until 1846).

By mid-nineteenth century this place had, and still has, a whole host of ethnic varieties. Here were experienced the barriers of differing languages, religions, and yes, racism and bigotry; however, there was also a need common to all; a need for companionship, solace, and encouragement in this new and often dangerous environment. At first ethnicity produced both pride and prejudice. But — over time — the need to defend ethnicity faded, and now it is a source of pride.

In addition, the common bond of hard, dangerous labor shared by the various ethnic groups gradually drew them together. Loggers, cannery workers, and fishermen developed a

common cause as they sought to improve working conditions and wages, and this place became a stronghold for virtually every radical notion adrift. Socialists, Communists, cooperatives, and labor unions, most notably the International Workers of the World, known derogatorially as the "Wobblies," found fertile soil here in this place. In context, the radical labor movements, which peaked in the earlier part of this century, were a means (right or wrong) of surviving in a place which had meaning. This was home! Their roots were here!

In summary, in its own peculiar way, society creates a sense of loyalty to a place. And the more difficult the shared struggle to survive, the deeper are the roots of the survivors. Here, at the CCHS, we preserve and present the meaning of place — this place. But we need additional means to go on doing this. We call on you, our friends and members to provide the means that we may continue to give meaning to this place, its people, past and present, and to all those who come our way. If the CCHS has meaning for you, and I know it has, I am confident you will provide the means. We owe this much to those who have gone before us, and to those who will follow us.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri on Christmas Eve, 1927, B.J. Williams earned BA and MA degrees at Southern Illinois University and PhD degree at University of Kansas. He was Curator, Archivist and Historian for the Kansas Methodist Historical Society; History Professor at University of Kansas; Chairman of Division of Social Sciences at Chadron State College of Nebraska; Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of History at Central Washington University at Ellensburg, Washington.

On February 23rd, Dr. Williams announced his resignation as the Society's Executive Director to the Board of Governors, effective April 1, 1988, after eight productive months of service to our historical society.

Sherman Lovell and the Indomitable Ford

By Robert S. Lovell

THERE ISN'T a mud-hole in Clatsop County I can't get out of with my Model T," bragged 27 year old Sherman Lovell to anyone who would listen after he began selling Fords in Astoria in 1913.

"Let me show you what my Ford can do," said Sherman one Spring day in 1913 to J.S. Dellinger, editor of the *Morning Astorian*; to H.R. Hoeffler, famous maker of Centennial Chocolates; and to Frank Woodfield, photographer. "Old Doc Henderson spent most of last night in his big White Steamer stuck in the mud near West Lake. He had to get a team of horses to pull him out in the morning." (Note: Dr. H.L. Henderson was famous in the area for at least two things — he had the grandest beard anyone had ever seen, and he was the

first physician to make his calls in an automobile).

"Come for a ride in my new Ford and you'll see why it can't get stuck," promised Sherman. The picture with this article, taken by Woodfield, proves his claim. Putting his Ford into the worst of the mud hole, Sherman used both feet, his left on the left pedal, which was both the clutch and the means of shifting from low to high, and his right on the middle pedal, which was reverse. Then he used his right hand to operate the throttle and proceeded to rock the car back and forth until it came out of the mud. "Nothing to it" Sherman said. "I can teach you to drive this car on any road in the County. You don't need three legs for the three pedals. The left pedal when it's half-way out

Sherman Lovell at wheel of his 1913 Ford demonstrating its ability to conquer Clatsop County muddy roads. Road shown was main route between Astoria and Seaside in vicinity of West Lake. Front seat passenger is H. R. Hoeffler; rear seat passenger, J. S. Dellinger. Photo by Frank Woodfield. All three bought Model T's after demonstration. (Lovell photo.)





Action shot of same Ford with Lovell driving as it plowed through the mud. Dr. H. L. Henderson had spent previous night stuck in the mire at this spot in his White Steamer. (Lovell photo.)

is neutral; when it's in, it's low; when it's out, it's high. Use the middle pedal to back up. The right pedal is the brake. The lever on the left is the spark. You retard it before you crank the engine and advance it when you get going. The right-hand lever is the throttle. I can teach you in a few minutes, after you buy the car."

After returning to town, Lovell did just that. He sold all three participants a new Ford. Lovell continued selling Model T's in ever increasing numbers until 1924, when he sold the franchise to my wife, Mary's grandfather, A.S. "Bob" Robinson. In those eleven years Clatsop County as well as the whole country was transformed from the horse and buggy era to the age of the motor car. Henry Ford's genius for mass-production, his drive for lower and lower prices, and the utility of Model T accomplished this miracle in record time. Sherman Lovell's first Model T had serial number 90,000. The last T, produced in 1927, had number 15,007,033.

The first carload arrives

Just prior to this demonstration, Sherman Lovell received his first

carload of Fords, six five-passenger touring cars and two two-passenger runabouts. One of the touring models was pre-sold to August Hildebrand, whose son, Frank, produced the picture shown with the article. Frank, who recently retired from active management in Hildebrand's Furniture, remembers the car as if it were purchased last week.

August had considered purchasing a Reo Speed Wagon from Lovell in 1912, and Lovell's partner, Mr. Zapf, had even taught 14 year old Frank to drive; however, its price of about \$1200, and its difficulty in climbing the muddy hills to the Hildebrand home at 15th and Jerome made August decide to stay with his horse and buggy. But the coming of the Model T changed his mind.

When I asked Frank why August decided to spend \$500 or so for a Ford, Frank replied that he bought on the say-so of William Moeller, a local mailman, who was very pleased with his Ford, apparently the first in the area. "Bill Moeller didn't use his car to deliver mail," said Frank, "but he was a bachelor and loved showing off his car on Sundays." Then of course,

Dad wanted a car that could make it up the 14th street hill to our house. There was a spring about where Star of the Sea School is now, and it was always muddy. Notice the chains in that picture," Frank continued, "we usually needed chains to get home."

"We used the Ford as a family car for a year or so, then cut out the back, removed the back seat, and made it into a pick-up for the store. That let us retire our horses and wagons," Frank remembered.

Hildebrand's first truck

"Besides making deliveries for the store, we used the Ford almost every Sunday to haul lumber to Seaside for our beach house. Art still owns this house and comes to Seaside every summer from his home in Arizona. We had bought the old Episcopal church at 8th and Commercial, which had to be torn down to make way for the Spexarth Building (now owned by the Fraser family and until recently known as the State Office Building.) This was the lumber we hauled in our Ford. The road was mud, sand, and some planks but the Ford always made it," noted Frank.

"The original T was all we had at the store until we bought a one-ton Ford truck in about 1917, but the old one was kept as a second truck for a number of years after that."

I asked Frank about how he maintained the car. "Before we took it for a drive," Frank remembered, "we always topped off the gas tank. The tank was under the right-hand front seat, so we took out the cushion, got a funnel, used a stick to measure, and filled the tank from our own supply. We bought our gasoline from the Standard Oil Company; their office was in the little brick building still standing near 5th and Marine Drive. They delivered the drums from a horse-drawn wagon to our house. The tank had to be full or we wouldn't make it up the hill. The Ford had no

fuel pump, relying on gravity, and with our steep hills this could be a problem. Of course, we could always back up the hill," Frank chuckled.

"We also oiled all the grease cups every trip," Frank continued. "We had a gauge and checked the tires. If they didn't have 60 or 65 pounds pressure, we got out the hand pump and gave them a few strokes. Tires only lasted two or three thousand miles. We learned to fix flats. We always carried patches, rubber cement, tire irons, and a good spare. Dad didn't like old Henry's having different-sized tires front and back, so we replaced the fronts to match the rear tires and only had to carry one spare."

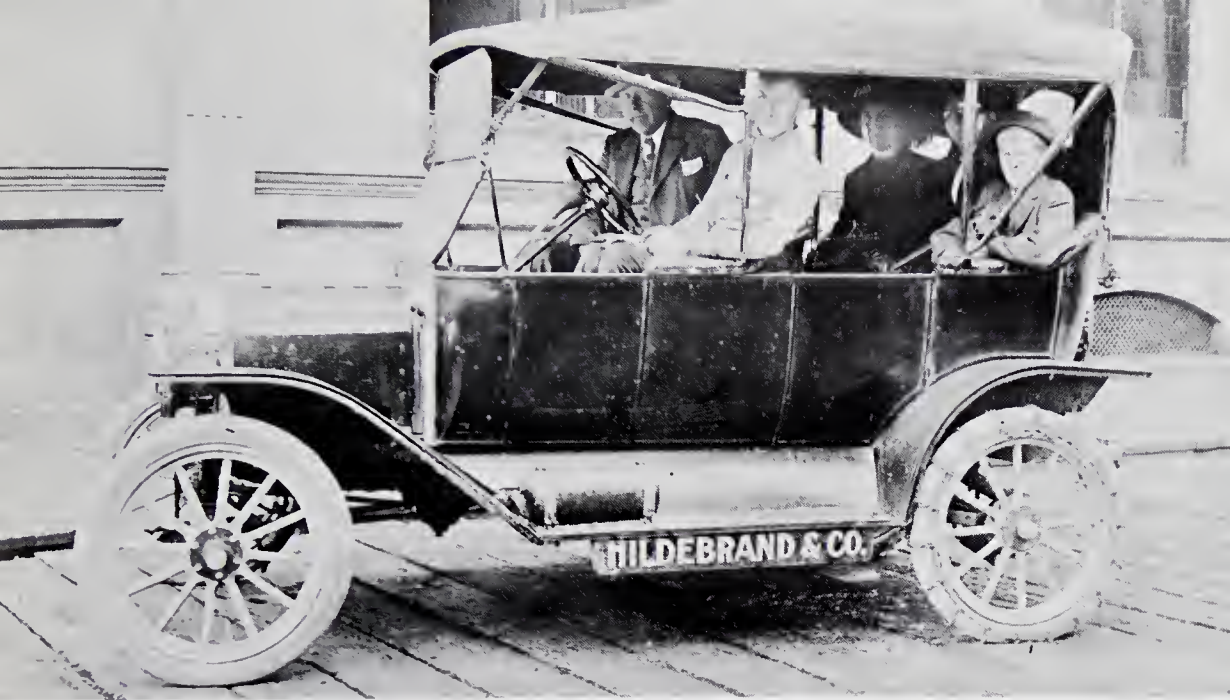
Dr. Henderson's steamer

When I asked him about Dr. Henderson and his Steamer, Frank replied, "Oh Yes, it was a big car and very fast, but he could only go about 30 miles before he ran out of water."

Incidentally, some time in the next year or so, my father, Sherman, sold Dr. Henderson a new Stanley Steamer that could go 70 or 80 miles before it's boiler ran dry. Dad demonstrated its power by driving up the front steps of the County Courthouse. But a little later, the car along with Dr. Henderson's garage, burned to the ground one night. Apparently, the pilot light had been left burning and the car got too hot. Dr. Henderson's loss was investigated by State Arson people but no opinion was rendered. Lovell Auto never sold another steam-powered car.

The coveted Ford franchise

In the fall of 1912 an event took place that caused Lovell to acquire the Ford franchise. The Fisher brothers, Augustus and Ferdinand, having sold their store earlier, had written Ford Motor Company to ask about getting rights to sell Fords in Astoria. Ford had made its reputation as a practical car for the times by



Frank Hildebrand, age 15, at wheel of family's new 1913 Ford. Frank's father, August, in front seat; mother, Katie, in rear with brother, Arthur, age 10, and friend, Mrs. Sauder, a local seamstress. Building is Odd Fellows hall at corner of 10th and Commercial with Astoria National Bank on ground floor. Note plank streets found all along downtown Astoria before fire of 1922. Note rubber bulb horn on Model T, standard Ford issue until 1917; also note Prest-O-Lite tank on running board which contained compressed gas for headlights; tire chains on rear wheels required to negotiate muddy streets above down town area. (Lovell photo.)

winning a transcontinental race from New York to Seattle. The Fishers owned the first car in the County, a 1903 Rambler. Their garage, attached to the right side of their home at 687 12th Street, was Astoria's first.

Thus, the Ford factory man decided to drive to Astoria to show how his car could handle the primitive roads. It was a two-day trip from Portland through the Nehalem Valley, with an overnight stop at the Mist Hotel. All went well until he was coming down the 15th street hill, near Jerome, when his car slipped off the planks in the middle of the street and he couldn't get his car back on them. He called for help and Sherman Lovell responded. After getting him pulled back on the road, Sherman asked him why he was in town.

"When you've finished talking to the Fisher's, come see me," Sherman said. By this time, Lovell Auto Co. was two and a half years old, and was in

its second location, having out-grown its original garage at 18th and Exchange and moved into a new building a half-block south on 18th, near Franklin. Lovell sold Reo's, pumped gas, repaired the few cars in town, sold Goodyear tires, and mainly earned his living running Astoria's only taxi. With Astor Street running wide-open and something like 50 saloons in town, this kept him very busy.

The Ford representative favored Lovell over Fisher and offered Sherman the franchise if he would order a carload of eight Fords. The cars would be shipped the following Spring. Nobody then believed cars could be driven in the winter weather. So Lovell's next step was to arrange financing as the carloads came with a sight draft attached to the bill of lading. The draft had to be honored by a bank before the cars could be unloaded.



Dr. Jorma Leinassar perched on hood of his 1925 Model T coupe. Photo taken at Youngs Bay log dump about 1935. Note sailing ship on beach in background. Jorma purchased car for \$19 in 1933 to drive to Astoria High School. (Lovell photo.)

Sherman's plan for financing

Lovell went to his father's banker, S.S. Gordon, cashier of the First National Bank. Gordon had provided some help two years before when Lovell Auto ordered its first two Reo's. So Sherman was confident. "I've enough money, Mr. Gordon," he said, "to pay for two Fords. You advance for the other six, and keep the title to eight. I'll pay them off as I sell them. All my sales will be for cash, and you can stay two cars ahead."

This did not evidently seem to be enough protection for such risk, concluded Gordon, so he replied: "Young man, I'm impressed by what you've been able to do, and you have paid back the note which you and

your father signed. But automobiles are only for the wealthy few. Why we don't have any roads to speak of, and they're always muddy or ruts of sand. I think you should go back to work in your father's foundry. Now that's a solid business. If you still think you need the money, however, the bank will loan it to you provided you get your father and one other credit-worthy person to co-sign with you."

My father thanked Mr. Gordon for his time and left to look for another banker. He never returned to the First National Bank for a loan.

Finally, the Scandinavian American Bank, with J.M. Anderson, Cashier, agreed to Lovell's terms, and he was ready for his carload.

Frank Hildebrand, upon hearing this story remembered how another prospective borrower, upon being turned down by S.S. Gordon, got her revenge. One of the leading Astor Street madams, after telling Gordon of her need for money to make her establishment the finest in town, was curtly rejected. Whereupon she changed the name of her place to "Gordon's House."

But Gordon's pessimism about the future of the car business did not take into account the great popularity of Henry Ford's Model T. The moving assembly line, the five dollar day for his worker, plus Henry's utilitarian design changed forever the face of American life, just as it did that of Clatsop County. Lovell Auto's future was assured.

Robert wants a Model T

By 1938, however, when I wanted a Model T, Sherman Lovell's love affair with Ford had been over for some time. A former teacher of mine, Mabel Johnson, (she later married and retired from many years of teaching as Mabel Swift), had traded in her 1927 Model T. This was on our used car lot, priced at \$50 about the time I was ready for the University of

Oregon. This model was the last T, with a dull green color rather than the traditional black. It had a nickle-plated radiator, and looked almost new. Miss Johnson had kept an army blanket over the seats, and had placed an extra rug on the floor. She had only driven it a few miles a day to and from school. So I asked Dave Lewis, our used car manager, to teach me how to operate the three pedals. I had the \$50, but not my father's permission.

For at least two weeks, the Model T with all its faults was the topic of dinner table conversation. I learned especially that their wishbone steering was very dangerous.

"The last time I ever drove a Model T," my father recalled, "was almost fatal. I was driving a Model I I had traded in, back to Astoria from the beach which I almost put it into the Skipanon River." He went on to describe how the front end shimmied from some holes in the bridge decking, causing him to hit the railing. "And this was the exact spot where Frank Sanborn drove into the river a little earlier and drowned," concluded my angry father.

"Did I ever tell you about how poor Sven Gimre drove his Model to church one Sunday morning in 1914 and ended up in the Columbia River. His wife and two children drowned, but he escaped. He got those skinny front tires caught in the street car tracks, and in wrenching the car out of the tracks, lost control. I taught him to drive and sold him the car. That was the worst day of my life," said my Dad. Mr. Gimre later went to Norway and came home with another wife and started a new family.

I also heard how the Model T brakes were not to be trusted; how bad the headlights were; how little power they had on the hills; and on and on.

After all this education, I went off

to college without a car.

Another proud owner of a T

The final picture with this article shows the late Jorma Leinassar proudly posing on the hood of his Model T. He told me when he gave me the picture that he paid Carl Nyquist \$19 for the car in 1933, drove it for four years, and was very unhappy when his mother sold it for an unknown sum while he was away at Oregon State College. Jorma said his Ford had a Ruckstell two-speed rear axle, so that it had four speeds ahead instead of the standard two. This optional equipment came out in about 1923. Frank Hildebrand said his father wouldn't install this axle on his Fords because he was afraid it would slip out of gear coming down hill, and he knew the brakes weren't very good.

Jorma liked the Ruckstell axle because with it he could easily climb 16th street to get to the old high school. He pulled a trailer behind the car when he went to the log dump for a weekly load of firewood. That is where the picture was taken. Jorma was proud that he did all his own work on the car.

The Model T becomes a relic

Even today thousands of Model T's are lovingly maintained by car enthusiasts who understand their idiosyncrasies and perhaps appreciate the contribution made by this little 1200 pound vehicle in putting America on wheels."

Robert Sherman Lovell joined the family firm in early 1945, left in 1946 for six months to complete his education, and has been with the company since. His daughter, Martha Dahl, went to work there in 1979 and is now listed as successor on Lovell's factory franchise agreements. Robert and Mary Robinson Lovell have three other children; Bill lives in Detroit and is a senior editor of Auto Week magazine; Jane is a San Francisco attorney; Anne is a nurse, living in Clackamas, Oregon. Robert has been a Director on the board of the Historical Society since 1983.

My Youth on the River

By Harold C. Nelson

Part III

WHILE LIVING on 14th Street, we had as next door neighbors, Hazel and Dan Hall. Many of you who read this article will recall them as dear friends or acquaintances I am sure. (See *CUMTUX* Vol. 2 No. 1 page 12). They both were active in the community and giving of their time.

Dan and his business partner, Harold Johnson formed the Johnson and Hall Richfield oil distributorship in Astoria. Both came from the Grays River area on the north shore.

Dan was a native of Chinook and a school teacher for a while in the area, later operating a general merchandise store at Rosburg on the banks of Grays River before coming to Astoria. Their first gas station was on Bond Street adjacent to the old Fisher Bros. Hardware on 12th Street.

One of my first jobs was pumping gas at the station, and I do mean pumping. This was before the present pumps with the metered continuous flow. The cylindrical frame had a round glass reservoir with horizontal lines spaced to equal one gallon. The capacity was ten gallons as I recall. To refill the reservoir one would operate a handle forth and back to pump gas up into the glass reservoir from the underground storage tank. That is the origin of the phrase, "pumping gas," I suppose.

One thing that strikes me today is the difference in service when one drives into a gas station. Attendants during my time would hit the pavement on a run before the auto had come to a stop. Taking care of the gas, oil, water and tire check was automatic for each customer. Cash was the norm. I don't recall credit cards at that time.

Hunting at Woody Island

Hazel Hall had a brother, Art Anderson, who was a fish buyer at Woody Island on the south bank of the slough. He lived in a float house the kind often used by gillnetters. Tim Driscoll, an old timer on the river lived nearby and was a friend of Dan and Hazel. In later years Tim moved to Ilwaco and built square stern gillnet boats in the old McGowan cannery warehouse.

Tim had invited Dan and Hazel up for a duck shoot over Armistice Day weekend and I was invited to go along and stay with Hazel's brother Art in his float. We drove up to Brownsmead and Art picked us up in his fish boat. There was no ramp at Aldrich Point as there is today. A slough ran in from the river which was later closed off by a dike. Tim ran a sort of club for some of the Astoria professional people but this was a hunt for Dan and Hazel only.

East, or downstream, wind prevails during the hunting season and I can remember the wind whistling through the cracks during the night. Art got me up early and cooked breakfast lighted by coal oil (kerosene) lamp. It was still pitch black out when Art's nephew, Kenny Wilson, who lived with him, took me upstream about a half mile to Trondsen Island in his fish boat towing my duck skiff behind. Kenny was gillnetting at the time. I have since learned that he fished Alaska waters for many years and now resides in Chinook, Washington.

Kenny directed me to a spot in a slough running up through the middle of the Island where I put out my decoys. In those days there was no restriction on the number of shells

one could place in the magazine, six shots being allowed, one in the chamber and five in the magazine. Now you are restricted to three shells. The bag limit was ten a day, 20 in possession. Today it is five and ten. No more than four mallards, one only being a hen. I was the only hunter in the whole island so had it all to myself. What a time I had!

Dan and Hazel had to return home Sunday but Monday was a school holiday so I got to stay and hunt a full day both Saturday and Sunday, ending up with 20 mallards mostly greenheads.

The steamer *America* was running daily between Portland and Astoria making a stop at the old Brookfield cannery located directly across the river on the Washington side. The cannery had burned July 17, 1931 but fishermen and their families continued to reside there for a few years after the fire.

Art took me across the river on Monday in his fish boat where we met the *America* as it was headed down stream from Astoria. I boarded with my 20 birds, a mighty happy and proud young hunter.

Fifty two years have passed since that memorable hunt. Surprisingly, I am still hunting the same general area out of a float house not far from where Art had his float. I still enjoy it despite the cold east wind, frost, ice and wet sou-westers. I'm retired, so usually spend three or four days every week in the shack during the season. Only now I have an outboard for propulsion instead of oars. I'll have to admit its a lot easier, especially during a strong tide and wind.

Snow time was fun time

Living on 14th street afforded some excellent sledding in the winter. As I think back, it seems like we had colder weather with more snow then. Maybe because I remember some

really good snow packs that lasted a week or more.

Fourteenth and 16th streets had what we thought were the best hills for sledding. On 14th we would start at Jerome and go all the way to the Ferry Landing. I recall one evening I had a "brush" with a car while crossing Commercial Street. In those days traffic was pretty light in the evening so we would take chances when crossing Commercial. It so happened a Ford sedan with balloon tires was proceeding east and entered the intersection about the same time as I did. I rolled off my sled before impact, my sled going off to the northeast corner and I sliding into the right rear balloon tire wheel hitting it with my back. Luckily I was not hurt. I scared the daylights out of the driver who thought he had run over me. When I told him I was all right he scolded me for being such a "damn fool kid." In retrospect I guess I deserved to be admonished.

Sixteenth street was similar, starting at the old High School on Jerome and going all the way onto the railroad dock, where the Regatta was held till burning down. The City would allow traffic barriers to be placed on all side streets into 16th, in fact city employees would set up the barricades.

Sometimes we would use bob sleds with about six aboard. We would really go down the hill with speed with all the weight.

Leo J. "Tick" Malarkey was a neighbor with boys John, Don and Bobby Dan, the little fellow. "Tick" was in the insurance business taking over from his father Dan of an old Warrenton pioneer family.

One winter "Tick" obtained an old horse sleigh which he hooked to the rear of his Buick, purchased from Sherman Lovell, no doubt, and took us kids for a ride to Uppertown past the old Dr. Waffle house near 37th



The author as a small boy with his Grandpa and Grandma Wicken in McGowan, WA about 1920. (Nelson Photo.)

Street. What fun that was, sleigh bells and all, minus the horse of course.

Speaking of the Waffle house, Josephine, daughter of Drs. Eldred and Clara Waffle and sister to Frances, married Harry Swanson from Nebraska. He was a Forestry student at O.S.C. Harry and I were Sigma Nu fraternity brothers. He served as Eminent Commander and I as House Manager.

Astoria has been the source of many brothers to the fraternity both at Oregon State and the University of Oregon. To mention some I knew were Bob Anet, Don Riswick, Wally Johansen, Ted Sarpola, Gene Knutsen, Wally Palmberg, "Doo Doo" Larson, Willie Porter, Hank Neilson, Bill Van Dusen, Don Malarkey, Ole Nygaard, Bud Stevens, George Peeke, Lee Canessa, John Parpala, John Osborn, and two of the Astoria High coaches, "Honest John Warren" and George Emigh.

McGowan Days at Grandpa Wickens

I was very young when I started to spend time with my grandparents at McGowan, Washington, just across the river from Astoria. I was born in the family home located near the

tunnel which is under the present Ft. Columbia State Park. There were two other homes adjoining, occupied by the Jack Coyle and Eric Lindstrom families. Not a trace can be found today of these homes. Both of these large families were of children more of my mother's age. Mr. Coyle died when I was very young. The Lindstrom family moved to Chinook so my acquaintance was limited. As I grew older I knew the Coyle brothers who were friends of my uncles. They were Tom, Stu and Henry Coyle, all of whom worked for the McGowans on the fish traps. Tom later became sheriff for Pacific County. It was during my days with Grandpa Wicken tending his fish trap that I began to know the three brothers despite quite a difference in our age.

Stu married a woman, Kay, who was a telephone operator from Warrenton who later became Chief operator in Albany, Oregon. Little was I to know that years later during my employment with Pacific Telephone that I would have occasion to talk to her.

Grandpa Acquires Own Trap

Grandpa Wicken, eventually, had earned enough money working for the McGowans to purchase a fish trap and home from a bachelor named Brinjulf Johnson. The trade was located almost directly off shore from the still standing McGowan church built by Patrick McGowan. It was issued Lic. # 2530 according to an 1889 chart.

The home still stands, unoccupied, and in a deteriorated state approximately two thirds of a mile upstream from the church. Several homes have been built on the land and nearby. Grandpa would hand knit the web for the trap. He used a white cotton twine measures by numbers. All that I remember was something like 52, 60 and 72 twine. The latter being largest. He would fasten a piece

of water pipe across the kitchen front window to hold the mesh while he knitted, smoking a corn cob pipe filled with Prince Albert tobacco. He would buy the tobacco by the pound in a round, red can with the picture of Prince Albert on it. A huge pile of web would eventually accumulate in the corner of the kitchen. He would spend a few hours a day during the winter knitting. He would buy machine made web for the larger sections.

I am sure my grandparents lived a very satisfying life making a good cash income from the fish trap. Food was plentiful from the summer garden of a variety of vegetables, fresh milk, cream and butter from the Guernsey cow, fruit from the orchard and plenty of fresh fish as often as you wanted, plus eggs with chicken every Sunday. Grandma baked her own bread. I have never tasted toast made from that home baked bread as good as I have in Grandma Wicken's kitchen. Her speciality was "tosties" a sweet bread that when cool enough she would thick-slice, divide into three sections and placed in an open pan to harden the bread in the oven. With gobs of butter on it you had to dunk it in your coffee to soften it

Harold Nelson and Grandmother Wicken on the steps of the Wicken home in McGowan on a summer's day in 1927. (Nelson Photo.)



enough to bite into it. Yum-m was it good! Today I often stop at Home Baking Company in Astoria and buy their cinnamon toast which is similar to that which Grandma made.

The narrow gauge train

A rather unique transportation system that had been in existence for a good many years was slowly coming to its demise about this time. It consisted of river boats from Portland via Astoria that docked at Megler, being met by a narrow gauge railroad that terminated at Nahcotta on Shoalwater Bay. Intermediate stops were made at McGowan, which even boasted a Post Office, Chinook, Ilwaco, Seaview, Long Beach, Ocean park and a few other flag stops.

I rode the train a few times. Its pace was rather slow as it chugged its way daily. When it passed Grandpa's house the kitchen windows would rattle. We would await its sound daily as it meant the mail and the *Evening Budget*, Astoria's daily newspaper, except Sunday, would be coming. I would hurry along the gravel road which paralleled the track to the McGowan Company's office which also served as Post Office. By the time I arrived, Horace Thyng, McGowan's bookkeeper, would be opening the mail sack and sorting the mail for the half dozen families residing there.

Mr. Thyng wore a tweed suit and always had on a hat even in the office. I would describe it as a wool, woven English type. He always smoked a pipe. He could have been a Scot or an Englishman. I can still see him standing at his high desk or sitting on a high stool. One of his duties besides keeping books was the daily weighing of fish brought in from the three McGowan traps and also from Granddad's.

A fish receiving dock had been constructed directly in front of the McGowan office about 400 feet off



The Astoria-North Beach Ferry Co.'s **TOURIST # 3** crossing the Columbia on a usual run in 1932. (CCHS photo # 5046 - 344.)

shore. Not a trace exists today. Mr. Thyng was very precise in the weighing of the fish. The balance arm of the scale was always centered exactly on the level, not an ounce heavy, not an ounce light. He favored neither the buyer or the seller. I think, Mr. Henry McGowan, his immediate superior, was more than satisfied with his performance of many years.

Elfving's first ferry

The McGowan dock was modified enough to accommodate a ferry landing slip about 1922. My Dad often told me that Fritz first ferried cars with a barge pushed by his launch *Louise*. It was in 1922 that he built the ferry *Tourist I*. Business increased and then *Tourist II* was built. The ferry landing was moved to Pt. Ellice where new facilities were constructed. Eventually the landing was again moved to Megler which lasted until the Bridge was completed. I made many trips from all three landings especially Megler. I decked on the *Tourist II* during the summer of 1939. Allen Hughes was skipper and Pete Ringstead was engineer, both old time boat people in Astoria. The *Tourist II* had a six cylinder Fairbanks Morse diesel.

There have been numerous stories told about Fritz Elfving. He was an unforgettable character as anyone who had the slightest association with

him would affirm. His wife Laura, was a sister of my Dad's brother August's wife, Sophia.

Fritz's brother Henry, a younger man, also came over from Sweden but not before learning the operation of marine diesel engines. Henry was Port Engineer as well as handling the engine room watch on the *Tourist II*. He was considered one of the top knowledgeable diesel engineers on the river. I can attest to the cleanliness of that engine room. Incidentally, his son of my age, John Henry (Bimmy) Elfving, went through most of grade and high school with me. He was killed early in World War II.

The ferry ran on a regular schedule unless traffic backed up. Then it would not adhere to the schedule. During the layover Henry would usually come ashore on the dock at the foot of 14th Street and visit with people or run up town on an errand.

One day Fritz was in a hurry to leave and he started down the slip to board saying to Henry in his Swedish accent "Vell-ve go, start em oop." Henry responded saying it was not quite time yet for their departure per printed schedule. Fritz answered, hurrying down the slip saying, "Tro da skiddles away — full speed ahead."

Fritz's life revolved around his ferry business. He worked many hours

a day, 7 days a week, holidays and all. He did take a day off occasionally, during the duck hunting season. He had a leased lake at one time on Nehalem Bay and later on Svensen Island. He would invite my Uncle August to join him often.

Days of the fish trap

Once the gear was placed on the trap piling the days were routine, going out in the trap tender towing the lifting skiff to remove the catch daily. Occasionally torn web from floating debris had to be repaired, and the usual removal of debris.

Since I had to wait for summer vacation from school to go over to McGowan, I missed out on the initial putting out of the gear. During the summer there was some work required such as tarring of the replacement gear which was done around mid-season. A heavy growth of reddish moss would accumulate below low water mark, so we would replace with another set.

The cotton web and various lines and ropes were tarred to prevent rot. This was done by immersing in a metal tank containing a combination of heavy oil and chunks of tar that came in metal drums and oak staved barrels. You cut the tar into chunks with an axe. The mixture was heated by building a fire beneath the tank in a hollow dug in the ground under the bank. One had to be careful not to set the facility on fire. After soaking well for a few minutes, a rope was attached to one end of the web and hoisted out of the tank into a reel turned by a hand windlass. Here it would set until excess solution would drain off and back into the tank from a sloping V shaped catch trough.

Once it had drained we would unreel it onto the flatbed of the truck, which had been provided with a wooden platform to catch excess drainage. Grandad's property had enough field area to spread the web

so it would dry and firm up. My job was to drive the truck as the web was either spread out to dry or pick up for loading.

The first truck was a model T Ford with three foot pedals for engaging the gears. A spark and gas throttle lever was mounted on the steering post. You started the engine with a hand crank under the radiator.

Later Grandpa bought a second hand Dodge truck from Lovell's in Astoria, which had more power and capacity. I soon learned how to shift the gears with aid of the clutch pedal. I wasn't old enough to have a driver's license yet, but being where we were and driving not more than one-half mile or so from the house I don't think there was much concern for a license then. The Dodge was a self starter.

Bakery goods from Astoria

It is surprising when one has the very best home made breads and pastries you looked forward to the bakery truck which came across to the Washington side of the river by ferry. Home Baking Company, I believe, made the run to the North Beach communities but it could have been the Dixie Bakery from Astoria.

Horace Timmen was the driver. He had a son Frederick (we called him Fritz) who was my age. We went to Central Grade School together in Astoria.

We would walk a short distance to the highway shortly before the ferry would land at Pt. Ellice and wait for Mr. Timmen to come by. He would stop and sell us bread and pastries. For some unknown reason the loaves of white bread tasted so good. I guess because it was the idea of store bought rather than homemade. We only bought bread when Grandma's home supply got low. Today, I feel, its like eating air. I only buy certain brands and types now and then for toast making and sandwiches when

the occasion requires.

When Dad was running the pilot launch at Astoria, he was given a Collie pup by an English ship's captain. As we had no real home for the pup in town, "Fido" was given to my grandparents. One of his favorite games was to go up to the creek that emptied into the Columbia River at Pt. Ellice ferry landing during the winter months. Here he would spend most of the day catching Dog salmon (chum) that spawned in the creek.

Any day that he would be missing all day and come home wet and tired we would know where he had been and the next day we could prove it by finding dead salmon alongside the creek. When I drive by the old creek area today I find no trace of that stream.

Back in the days of my youth, small town baseball teams flourished. Town teams I recall were Chinook, Ilwaco, Ft. Stevens, Astoria, Westport and Cathlamet among others.

My uncle Henry "Chick" Wicken was pitcher for the Chinook team. Games were usually played on Sundays. Sometimes I would get to go with him. One trip was especially fun when the team played Cathlamet.

Some of the team and local towns folks went up to Cathlamet on the cannery tender *Man-O-War* owned by Chinook Packing Company. Gus Bergestein was her skipper. He stopped and picked up my uncle and me at the McGowan dock in the morning. We didn't get back until late that night. I'll always remember when we were coming down below Altoona through the Gray's River Flats. It was pitch black, so it seemed, Gus had his head out through the open window singing, "I wish I had the wings of an angel." The adults were having a good time while we children looked on or went to sleep in the galley.

Cannery delivery scows

To accommodate the fisherman,

salmon canneries provided land-based delivery stations and floating scows along the river. This allowed delivery of fish near to the fishing ground, thereby relieving the gillnetter of having to run all the way to the cannery and back. At times the gillnetter might live aboard his boat for several days without returning to home base.

The cove at Megler provided an ideal location for several scows. C.R.P.A. (Bumblebee) had a scow manned by Martin Marincovich. Chinook Packing had one manned by Fred "Beef" Reef Jr. "Beef" was a good friend of my Uncle Jim.

Fred Reef Sr. had two fish traps nearby. Walter Williams and "Smitt" Nelson both of Chinook had traps upstream near Knappton and Rocky Point. All delivered to the scow including Granddad who later changed from McGowan to Chinook Packing.

An old dock receiving station was also located in the Cove. It was either Altoona or Pt. Adams Packing. A man and wife lived in the small quarters. I bought candy bars occasionally from them. There was another receiving scow but I do not remember which cannery owned it. Later Chinook Packing moved the scow to a spot just below Pt. Ellice ferry landing. This was better for Grandad as it cut the run from the trap about one half time. Buck Olson of Chinook manned the scow here. After making deliveries we always visited for awhile and had coffee with the various fishermen.

Beef and Buck would give me a dime or a quarter to box the fish after the weighing. They lived aboard the scows except from late Saturday through Sunday evening. As you will remember from past Cumtux articles, no fishing was allowed 6 p.m. Saturday through 6 p.m. Sunday. The State of Oregon had a fish patrol boat operated by Henry Larson of Astoria.

He made his rounds regularly about 6 p.m. on Sunday evening along the Washington shore.

Fish traps were equipped with a light small mesh web called an "apron". This was lowered to the bottom weighted with rocks and closed the two entrances from the trap lead into the heart. The two openings adjacent to one another were about 10 to 12 feet wide, one on the upstream side of the lead and the other on the lower side. No fish could then enter the trap."

Fish poachers

Stories were told of the early day fish pirates who stole fish from the traps. I know of none during my trap days, however, the possible threat existed.

During August when the runs were highest we would often take the trap tender and go out to the trap a few hours after high water when the ebb current built up. It was then that the flood tide caught fish would swim against the downstream current and progress through funnels into the big and little pots (spiller) from the heart.

At this stage the salmon would surface occasionally while holding their positions in the current. By the amount which showed in this way one could fairly well estimate how big a "lift" you would have the next day. It was always fun to do this, usually with my Uncle Jim. We would climb up on the rim poles to obtain a higher view point to look down into the spiller. Sometimes a seal would be caught so we'd go back and get a shot gun to finish him off. A bounty of \$5.00 was paid by the State for all seals killed. Not so today. A heavy fine can be administered for so much as molesting let alone killing.

On one occasion we had gone out to "take a look", as we called it. What a sight it was. The surface in the spiller was seething with surfacing salmon. After returning home and

discussing with Grandpa it was decided we had better go and "lift" even though it was late and not quite slack water. A fish poacher would really hit the jackpot.

It developed that we caught 4400 pounds. The lifting skiff was all but awash. We transferred some of the fish into the tender and made delivery that night.

There were other occasions during the peak of the run when we would tie up to the trap and sleep all night on the tender to guard against possible pirates.

Washington Fish traps

Fish traps were introduced from the East coast and modified and improved to suit local conditions, in the 1800's. They were located along both sides of the Columbia river from Ilwaco to The Dalles. The bulk was located in Baker's Bay between Ilwaco and Ft. Columbia. There were parallel rows in Baker's Bay near Chinook. How fish could be caught in all of them was really surprising as they were so close together.

I remember a trap located on the Lewis and Clark River just below the bridge but I don't think it had been geared for some time. There were several traps in the Cove at Point Ellice below the Ferry landing owned by Fred Reef, Sr. of Chinook. Starting at the then operating Pt. Ellice ferry landing and going downstream to the Ft. Columbia dock were the following owners. First I must tell you where Ft. Columbia dock was located. For those of you familiar with Ft. Columbia museum, or the tunnel, the dock was about three-quarter mile downstream from McGowan church. A long pile supported roadway extended out into the river about 500 feet to a dock with a shed on it. This was used by boats serving Fort Columbia. At one time Ft. Stevens, Ft. Columbia and Ft. Canby, the latter near Ilwaco, were sizeably staffed

and were served daily by boat. My mother told me of riding the boat called "*Major Guy Howard*" and visiting with Vivian Mudd, a Hammond girl friend. Vivian married an Army Officer stationed at Ft. Stevens named Nelson. He died in World War I. A daughter Gerry was born to them. We went through most of school together. Gerry now lives in Hammond. She is Gerry Gould.

As usual I have strayed from my story just to tell you where the dock was located.

Going back to the owners of the traps, the first was Festus Plumb and in successive order, Clarence Olson, a brother of Buck Olson, Otto Nelson,

the three McGowan traps, called the Upper, Middle and Lower traps. The Lower was the best steelhead catcher, sometimes up to 5-6 hundred pounds besides the salmon.

Then came the McGowan dock. Just downstream and further out was Charlie Anderson's trap. He had an inside tier trap slightly downstream. Then came my Grandpa's trap with Julius Jensen next and immediately above the Ft. Columbia dock. All these men lived in Chinook. We seldom travelled the river below Julius' trap so my knowledge from there is sketchy as to owners.

My grandparents frequently spoke of friends and acquaintances living in

An early fish trap across the Columbia River at McGowan was a common sight all along the river in the early days of salmon fishing. Mr. Nelson's story describes this invention. (Photo CCHS # 325 - 113.)



Chinook and we would drive down occasionally. I will attempt to name some. Perhaps you might recognize an old friend or acquaintance. The majority were fishermen, with a few merchants. Some I met myself as a child.

So here we go with some names: Mose Hershey, brothers Sam and Chris Olson, Ike, Sen, and Oren Belnap. Pet and Stuart Davis, Dan Williams, Mel Lebeck, Clint Jackson, Henry Jerstrom, Henry Soderland, Jim, Chuck and Don Mechals, Art, Al, and Antone Lindstrom, Bunny Butler, Bill Olson, Arnold Swanson, Dan Whealdon, Arville Nelson, "Yitz" Herring, "Pruny" Torviksen, Donaldsons and the Beckens (They operated a small confectionary in Chinook, where we bought ice cream.) I should also mention Millard For, Lew Williams, Nick and Sig Hansen, Jasper Prest, Henry Jensen, Carl Jernstrom, Chris Hansen, William Clancy.

Albion Gile was principal owner of Chinook Packing Company and married Lenore McGowan, daughter of Henry McGowan. Their beautiful colonial style home still stands several miles west of Chinook.

It was said in those days that Chinook had the highest per capita income of any place in the U.S. I do know that there were several trap owners who did very well.

Canneries had cash scows

My Uncle Henry, called "Hen or Chick" Wicken operated a "cash scow" several seasons for Pioneer Packing Co. They canned in Ilwaco and other Washington places. The common practice in those days between cannery and fisherman was for the fisherman to sell all his catch to one cannery. There were exceptions of course and that is where the cash buyer came in. The cannery fisherman would be carried on the books, whereas the cash buyer would



Landing a 12 ton salmon catch at an Astoria dock to one of the many fish canneries of the time. (CCHS photo # 3908 - 330.)

pay on delivery. It was cash too, not a check. Uncle Hen's scow was anchored between Clarence Olson and Otto Nelson's traps. When there were lots of fish I would help him. Usually the fisherman or his boat puller would pike the fish up onto the deck with a pew. Hen and I would then pike into the weigh box. When we were real busy the fisherman helped and I would do the weighing. I tended to weigh "heavy" for benefit of the fisherman who usually like to see the weight arm resting low meaning good full weight.

The cannery buying, furnished us a gallon jug of "moonshine" which we kept near the scale. After finishing the

weighing the jug would be passed around to the fisherman and his boat puller for a "pull" on the jug. You might call this good "PR" the old fashion way.

Price per pound varied

Price for salmon would start out at the top range at the opening of the season and progressively go down. I suppose its the same as the present day. The old law of supply and demand with quality playing a part. Around latter July price would start down.

The best price I recall at the beginning of the season one year was 23 and a half cents per pound. This was felt to be high. Gradually it lowered and one year I recall it being around 3 and a half cents for "tules". This was a term used for the late run in August when the male developed a hook nose and large teeth. Their color changed from the silvery bright to a brown yellowish color with heavy slime developing on the skin. The flesh changed from red to almost white. When this was canned it did not command the top price as the early silver pack.

As the opening of the Spring Salmon Season approached there was an excitement in the air throughout the city of Astoria and towns of Ilwaco and Chinook. The towns took on a new life shedding the remnants of the winter blasts and storms. The fishermen, seiners, cannery workers, and merchants alike faced the new season with eager anticipation and activity. The cannery tenders and stations were being readied. Nets and boats overhauled to be ready for May 1st. It meant merchants would be paid.

Looking out onto the river from my classroom at old Central School I too felt this as the gillnet boats left their moorings headed for their drift spots. It was like a parade. They could not lay out their nets until noon but most

were gone from the dock by nine or ten o'clock to be ready. As school was not out until the 25th of May, I would have to wait for my turn to take the ferry to McGowan for my summer with Grandpa Wicken.

On clear nights the river held a mass of white and red lights which marked the boats and nets. If a stranger arrived not knowing there was a river he could easily think it was a part of a town out there.

Harold Charles Nelson, native Astorian, attended Astoria Grade and High School graduating with the Class of 1936. He attended Oregon State College and was a member of Sigma Nu Fraternity with many of his Astoria friends and classmates. After a Navy commission and service in World War II he joined the staff of the Pacific Northwest Bell Company in Portland retiring in 1978. This is the third of four installments of his story.

SUNSET ON THE RIVER

*Sunset on the river,
Flecked with golden light.
Each soft wave a spray of silver
On the drooping folds of night.*

*The northern hills frame darkly
Multicolored gleams,
Fishing schooners brightly
Reflect the lengthening beams.*

*Far out upon the river,
Where it swiftly meets the sea,
A line of rippling rainbows,
Suddenly appears to me.*

*I can see the lonely breakers
And hear their lusty shout,
As they eternally endeavor
To turn the tide about.*

*Gliding suddenly, silently into view
A freighter steams along,
Lending the missing symphony
To the evening's sunset song.*

E.G.H.

The following copy of an original bulletin published on the day of the Astoria Fire, December 8, 1922, is from the Historical Society's collection of Astoria fire artifacts. This bulletin was among the Van Dusen family artifacts from the estate of Winifred Allen, whose grandfather, Hustler Van Dusen, was a son of the Adam Van Dusens of early Astoria.

Evening Budget Fire Bulletin

Dec. 8, 1922

The work of reconstruction has begun. On the ashes of the old Astoria a new Astoria will rise. But it's a big job and it needs stout hearts, strong wills and willing hands, and we have them all.

With the conflagration still raging, the work of organizing for relief work and to put in effect the first measures necessary to meet the emergency was begun.

Relief headquarters were opened before noon in the Y.M.C.A. building which was one of the few to escape the flames. With an impromptu committee heading by Rev. W.S. Gilbert of the Presbyterian church and composed of numbers of other prominent citizens, machinery was at once put into motion to provide food and shelter for the homeless and relief for all those in need of it.

Mayor Bremner before 11 o'clock had sent out the call for a general mass meeting of business men at the city hall, another of the few buildings spared, for 2 o'clock. At 1 a meeting of the emergency committee was held at the Y and determined upon a course of action but, before announcing anything to the public, wishes to submit its decisions to the mayor's mass meeting in order that there may be no conflict.

Seaside opens homes

A delegation of Seaside residents were over early to notify the relief committee that the Seaside Hotel is being opened and will offer shelter for all those in Astoria who are homeless. A free bus will leave the Y.M.C.A. building and all those wishing to go to Seaside are requested to call at the Y.

Portland was on the job early with offers of help. Not only was fire apparatus dispatched down here, but the Chamber of Commerce loaded trucks with provisions and started them down the highway. The state hotel association authorized an appropriation of \$5000 for relief work and other contributions are being sent to the mayor.

The Budget, like almost every other business institution, suffered the loss of its plant but it opened offices in the Y.M.C.A. early in the afternoon and will issue mimeograph bulletins from time to time simply as a means of keeping the public informed of what is going on, what measures are being put into effect, what co-operation is expected from the general public.

Insurance is OK

To relieve the anxiety of many people whose insurance policies were lost in the fires, J.T. Allen, insurance man, announces that all policies will be effective regardless of whether or not they were saved from the flames. G.C. Pauling makes a similar announcement, and says no one should worry.

Norris Staples Dead

Adding to the tragedy of the occasion was the sudden death from heart failure of Norris Staples, president of the Bank of Commerce and of the Staples Motor Co. He was

helping push one of his automobiles along the street to the zone of safety when he suddenly fell forward on the pavement. His son and Lloyd Van Dusen, who were assisting him, immediately secured Dr. Waffle but Mr. Staples expired within a few minutes.

Reports that W.H. Fellman and Brenham Van Dusen died are un-

founded. The report that Mel Callendar suffered the loss of an ear is likewise untrue. A man suffered a broken leg from being struck by a plank during the blasting. The body of a suicide was found hanging by the neck on the Sanborn docks but his identity has not been established.

(Watch for future bulletins)

Frank Woodfield stood on top of the hill on West Commercial Street to get this historic shot of the 1922 fire looking east. (Waters Collection.)



Astoria's "Union Fish"

By Ed Niska

NINETY TWO YEARS ago two hundred fishermen on the Oregon shore of the Columbia estuary resolved to can the Royal Chinook they caught in their nets. These fishermen were the founders of The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company in 1896.

This cooperative enterprise was established in troubled times. The future of the industry appeared uncertain. The founders risked their savings and their labor, convinced that their undertaking would succeed because it would give the fishermen a just return for his salmon and it would offer to the consumer a fine product.

Thirty years before this time, the first salmon cannery had begun on the Columbia River. The first cans produced were of an inferior, experimental type sold to the public under the fancy spring Chinook label. The fisherman suffered as the public was unwilling to pay the premium price for this type of canning.

The Leaders Were Top Fishermen

The far-sighted founders of this company of Union fishermen had the general welfare of the Columbia River's great industry at heart. Sofus Jensen, secretary of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union in 1896, was the leading spokesman for conservation of fisheries resources in which he was supported by most fishermen of the time.

It was on October 12, 1896 that the promoters of this new company proposed to incorporate under the name of The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company and elected the following men as incorporators: Sofus Jensen, John Ostrom, Ole B. Olsen, J.B. Nice, A.E. Minard, Anton Christ, J.W. Angberg and Anton Bang.

On January 8, 1897, the charter members elected as their first board of directors, Charles Wilson, Sofus Jensen, John Ostrom, Ole B. Olsen, J.B. Nice, A.E. Mindard, Anton Christ,

In 1897 the Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company was newly constructed and operating full time. The U.S. Cruiser, BALTIMORE is seen in the harbor. (CCHS Photo # 448-330.)



J.W. Angeberg and Matt Raistakka. The founders entered into the highly competitive salmon packing industry of the Columbia. Charles Wilson was named president and Sofus Jensen became manager and secretary. Frans Kankkonen, architect and builder of the new cannery was the cannery superintendent.

The Founders Build A Cannery

With their own savings as capital, the founders entered into the highly competitive and well-financed salmon packing industry of the Columbia. The site for the cannery was purchased January 16, 1897. The location in present day Astoria is the building and dock area now being dismantled to the East of Thunderbird's Seafare Restaurant along the Columbia River. The plant was 50 by 200 feet. Building of the net racks, except for pile driving, was done without charge by stockholders. They received \$1.50 a day working on the cannery. These were eager, talented craftsmen. Many had been brought up in Scandinavia, mostly Finland, where they had learned trades under masters. All were imbued with the cooperative movement then taking root in western Europe. The cooperative structure of the company appealed to them. Each fisherman received, not so much for each fish he delivered, but his share of the company's proceeds. With this method, strikes for higher fish prices were eliminated.

The Success of Cooperatives

The outstanding fishermen on the Columbia were active in the new cannery. Mr. Wilson, the president, had been a boat builder in Kokkola, Finland, before he came to Astoria in 1880. An outstanding gillnetter, he built fishing boats and cannery tenders during the winters. He improved the design of the sailing gillnet boat, making it more seaworthy in the hazardous bar

fishing. He served as president until ill health forced him to retire on January 26, 1915. At this time his brother Frans Kankkonen was with the company as superintendent and later, manager.

Among the two hundred founders of the company were men who knew the new art of canning salmon. Frank Norberg was the first salmon cook and was a most responsible and experienced perfectionist in the pioneer days of the industry. J.W. Angberg, a promoter of the Co-op had broad experience in cannery operation and held various positions in the plant until he became superintendent. He remained with the company until his retirement in 1932. He had resigned as first vice president of the company to serve as cannery refrigeration engineer. One of the patriarchs of the Cooperative was Tom Nelson, a charter member, who was secretary from 1901 to 1906. He had returned as manager in 1914 and directed the packing operations of the firm through the First World War and post war period until his resignation on February 15, 1921.

A Proud Day

The morning of April 11, 1897 was a day to remember for the "Two hundred," when 191 sailing gillnet boats tacked in to the new cannery, loaded with salmon.

The packing of fish was done mostly by Chinese workers, furnished by a labor contractor who received 34 cents for talls and 39 cents for flats. Many of these men remained with the company for many years.

Cannery machinery was of pioneer type. Most of the work was still done by hand.

"Gillnetters Best"

Despite the great competition among canneries in the early days, the high quality of the new cannery's pack and its high standard of grading salmon aided in marketing its product. The company soon worked

The old St. Mary's Church, built for Patrick McGowan family stood as a beacon for boats and ships to mark the coastline. It stands today on the spot that was Chief Concomly's village area.



through brokers. A part of the first pack was offered for sale to Everding & Farrell of Portland, Oregon and the Manchester Cooperative Wholesale System of Manchester, England. One carload was consigned through the Astoria Savings bank to Chicago.

The second season, two labels, "*Gillnetters Best*" and "*Cooperators Best*", were purchased. They soon established themselves in the trade as leading brands of the finest Columbia River salmon. As the company's production increased, new labels were added such as "*Golden Anchor*," "*Merito*," "*Southern Beauty*," "*Oceanic*," "*Orb*," "*Lantern*," "*Lex*," "*Governor*," "*Lightship*," "*Sextant*," and additional labels for other than fancy grades.

The Union Fishermen's Co-operative Packing Company, often shortened to "Union Fish" was well established in 1899 and announced its prices for the season's pack, tall at \$1.25, flats, \$1.40, and halves, \$.80. By 1902 the company had for brokers in New York, Turle & Skidmore; and in San Francisco, the early center of salmon brokerage, C.W. Pike & Company, J.K. Ormsby & Company, and Griffith Durney Company, and in Chicago, T.J. O'Bryne & Company. Since February, 1905 H.J. Blodgett Company had been the company's broker in Boston.

First Stenographer Hired

The entire work of handling the corporation's business, fell to the manager and secretary. They swept out the office as well. Miss Frances Norberg is remembered at Union Fish for relieving Mr. Nelson, manager at the time, and Mr. Anet, secretary, of some of the duties of handling the company's affairs. She was the first woman employee but was soon followed by Mrs. Ellen Sarpola as secretary to the manager, Miss Ellen Tahkola who looked after the fishermen's ledger, Mrs. Jenia Jenkins, fish ledger and fish receipts, and Mrs. Sylvia Langham, as secretary to the cannery superintendent. Mrs. Lempi Niemi was in charge of accounts receivable and accounts payable.

Ralph Kaarle, was the company paymaster, and Bill Hummasti, timekeeper.

Union Fishermen had receiving scows for the fishing fleet stationed at Jetty Sands, Sand Island, Point Ellice, Tongue Point and Frankfort in the first few years of operation. Later years Svensen, Brownsport and Tenas Illihee Island were added. They brought in all the salmon until the time of the First World War when trollers began to deliver salmon to us.

1900 saw the purchase of a storage warehouse, net racks and receiving station at the foot of 31st Street. In



Smith Pt. Warehouse And Bunkhouse

that same year the Company started mild curing salmon, a major phase of Astoria's fisheries when salmon were abundant. Secretary Jensen sailed for Europe, negotiating for business connections and made arrangements with L. Ritz & Company of Hamburg, Germany for selling pickled as well as frozen fish.

The Cold Storage is Built

The board authorized the building of 1200 tons capacity cold storage on September 14, 1903. One July 13, 1903 the company had shipped fifty tierces of salmon and six tierces of salmon heads to buyers in Helsinki. Frithiof Kankkonen, youngest of the three brothers, supervised building of the cold storage which was provided with a sharp freezer which brought the temperature down to 10 degrees. Steelhead were glazed.

In later years Frans Kankkonen, the cannery's first superintendent, who became Manager in 1902, made a trip to Europe in 1904, opening up new markets in Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. He contacted buyers on his return in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Sioux City.

Charles Anet who joined the company as bookkeeper on April 4, 1903 became secretary of the corporation in 1914. At that time he had

been with the company longer than any member.

Fish Launches Constructed

The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company financed the Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company of Aberdeen, Washington and built a warehouse at South Bend, Washington. The fishermen from the Columbia took their boats for fall fishing in the Chehalis River. A receiving station was provided in Puget Island. As the expansion continued in 1912 they financed the Umpqua Cooperative Packing Company to put up mild cured salmon. The launch *Globe* taken over from the Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company in 1914 sailed for the Columbia to join the company's *Independence I* built in 1897, and the *Independence II* built in 1910, both at Wilson Boat Shop. Early skippers were Tim Christ, Harry Olsen and Tom Hihnala. Other skippers were William Hendrickson, skipper of the *Globe* and Matt Wilson, skipper of *Independence II*.

Charles Stillright became foreman of the machine shop when it was enlarged in 1914 a position he held until 1943. Herman Nyman, coming to the can shop with Mr. Stillright, looked after can making and took charge of the machine shop when Stillright retired. In 1945 a new modern machine shop was built.

Company Rode Out Depression

No crisis in the history of the industry compares with that brought on by the collapse of the stock market in 1929. The only investment that paid dividends for the company during the depression was the conservative management of its affairs in preceding years. Refusing to weaken the tumbling market, the company held its 1931, 1932 and 1933 packs in warehouses.

Thousands of cases were stacked in the Taylor warehouse. In 1932, fancy

Chinook sold for \$1.25 a dozen, near fancy, \$.75 a dozen, and kippered salmon at nine cents a pound. In the wake of these prices came the strike of 1933 which was settled at eight cents a pound for salmon, two cents above the 1932 price.

Three young men who started with the early company and remained many years were: Arne Juola, who was appointed cannery superintendent in 1935 following Mr. Angberg; Edward Poysky, sales manager, who came in 1933 and Alex Sarpola, for years with the company, who held numerous positions with the company.

New Plant Built For Albacore

Manager Kankkonen supervised construction of the company's new tuna plant, in 1938 and in 1945 this plant proved practical for cleaning and packing of rockfish in which the Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company took the lead.

Soon sons of the founders, who learned to fish as young boys in their fathers' boats became leading fishermen of the times and many still pursue the Columbia River fish. There was Victor Carlson, son of V.O.

Carlson; Carl Matta, son of J.P., Wayne Erickson, son of Abram; Alex and Ed Jackson, sons of John; Toivo and Rudy Kantola, sons of Andrew; Emil, Ilmari and Wilho Korpela, sons of Matt; and Matt Korpela's grandsons, Eldon and Bill Korpela, well known names on the Columbia. Uuno Koskela, son of Kalle Koskela, was second vice president of the corporation. Two long time members of Union Fish were Axel Kaleva and Fred Niemala, gillnetters.

The company proceeded with building of a warehouse during World War II, though it was difficult to acquire the material. Rainier, Oregon was the new location for this building.

Though C.O. Moberg fished many seasons for the company before 1946, he became President of the Board of Directors. At the same time he was superintendent of Columbia Hospital in Astoria, and had been second vice president and then the first vice president. Anton Sorensen also held positions of auditor, vice president and manager of the company. Anton Sorensen was a gillnetter for the company all the years since being a charter member. He held positions as

It is difficult to imagine the large catches of fish in the early days of the canneries. Here tons of salmon are ready for the cannery. (CCHS photo # 4427 - 330.)





Charles Malagamba proudly holds a 64 pound Chinook salmon on his back for a Union Fish picture. Charlie's daughter, Molly Radich, identified her Dad as Machine Shop Superintendent at Union Fish. (Hankel photo.)

auditor, vice president and then president for ten years. He became manager in 1945 and at the same time was city commissioner for Astoria. Uuno Koskela, one of Union Fishermen's leading gillnetters was then second vice president of the board for eight years. Henry Reinikka, served as director from 1937 through 1946. Ilo Penttila, became a director in 1944 as did veteran gillnetters Charles Laity, Andrew Markus and oerganizatgional stockholder, Henry F. Toikka and Charles Markow.

The First Fifty Years

From 1896 to 1946, the first fifty years of this amazing company, The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company, the 200 original fishermen, promoted and supported general research in the preparation of new fisheries products which has opened up the utilization of the bottom fishery at a time when the annual salmon catch of the Columbia River began to fall off. During this time able research in new procedures for processing bottom fish began and

was undertaken by Seafoods Laboratory in Astoria and a laboratory was set up under the supervision of Dr. E.W. Harvey, who passed on in 1987. The company was always in support of this worthwhile institution and has cooperated in rendering what ever assistance it could in the field.

Niska Joins the Company

I was hired by Superintendent John Angberg to work temporarily for Union Fishermen during the August salmon run of 1931. I learned how to "slime" salmon. It was the secondary phase of fish butchering in that the carcass innards were de-veined of blood, cut the loose messentary and scrape out kidney structures along the backbone. The work by carried on by holding a gutted fish by the pectoral fin musculature and lifting it from the holding box onto a wedged wooden platform waist high and with a water hose suspended above it. Hence the fish was cleaned by light brushes with a knife blade held at an angle. When ready, the fish was lowered onto a conveyor that drew it through a mildly salted fresh water bath where it was inspected and carried further on to the grading master.

I returned to work with the cannery in earnest during the summer of 1935 when I decided to attend the University of Washington School of Fisheries. I was employed there during the following summers through 1939. That was the year that three of the University of Oregon Basketball team National Champions were co-workers namely: Bobbie Anet, Wally Johansen and Ted Sarpola. Other players included Toivo Piippo and J. Pflugrad.

My job during the 1935 season was with the sliming crew consisting of generally eight members. Thereafter I worked with the mild-cure and cold storage division through 1939.

Salmon Canning Process

Deliveries of salmon catches made generally during the evening, night and dark morning tides were usually made prior to work time. The salmon were lifted by hook or pugh from the boat fish locker into a wood box. This was a hoist suspended from a steel rod holder that allowed the container to up-end on swivel action when the gate lockrod was opened so that the contents upwards of several hundred pounds of fish could be unloaded into another box with wheels used as scale container. The load was weighed and notation of same was made on official Fish Commission landing records. Thereafter the box was wheeled to the open floor area immediately near the butchering table. During warm weather crushed ice was spread over the fresh salmon.

The number of butchers used depended upon the size of the catch deliveries. Extra's were hired during peak run periods in August and these were aided by helpers such as Alaska workers returned home who lifted the salmon onto the butchering tables. Sue Saiget, Charles Jow and Jimmy Lee were the last of the Chinese butchers during the thirties. These last three and three others, Alfred

Niemi, Jack Junnikkala, and Eino Mortti were remembered. It was hard work, required sharp knives and a good technique which all possessed. Fish were loaded on the table by small hand gaff into the head in a row with heads facing the butcher. Head removal was the primary cut then turned. The salmon was held by the tail, the knife quickly trimmed off the fins from one side, then flipped over to cut the fins on the other side, slit the gut, and remove the entrails by slicing the messentary wall, pull the organs, slide these on to a gut shoot and slit the kidney layer on the backbone, make a forward and backward blade stroke to clear same, and finally cut off the tail. Thereafter the carcass was pushed forward — it slid easily on a wet table top and through the wall opening separating the secondary "slimer" group into the holding box for pickup by them. This process is already described.

Rendering Boat Arrives

A wide open area led to this storage so that the DeForce company rendering boat *Samson* could enter. It was a low profile vessel with cabin and engine aft. This vessel delivered all the canneries offal on contract. Loading of the offal was by slide

Discussing new rockfish production of Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company, Board of Directors meets, left to right, Ilo Penttila, Matt Korpela, Andrew Markus, Uuno Koskela, Second Vice President; Carl O. Moberg, President; Charles Anet, Secretary; Uuno Sjoroos and Thomas Jorgensen, and Anton Sorensen, Manager. Vice President Niemi is not shown in photograph.



shute opening with hoses of water on the offal to make it slide into the hold of the vessel amidships.

The deForce plant was located on piling east of the mouth of the Skipanon River at Tansy Point in Warrenton. Huge cooking vats with steam rendered the salmon oil by floatation. The dried meal was used for fertilizer or animal feed in later years. Salmon oil was made for paint production. In later years when the forties oil from salmon heads was cooked by steam pressure in the cannery. Salt was added, then the oil was recovered by water addition flotation. It was piped into sterile cans and sealed by the hot oil hermetically. A five gallon can stored oil perfectly and it was then used on the canned salmon as an addition. Early days salmon canning did not include this process. It came as an "after the fact" when restrictions were placed on offal dumping into the river by the sanitary authority during the 1950's.

The Can Process

The inspection team observed the pack and removed undersize, imperfect fill, or any other objection for correction. The fillers had a scale near their work place that they could use in case of doubt, but years of practice made them excellent judges of their work. Then the passed can would proceed on the belt for a triggered salt quantity, and a similar salmon oil addition prior to being covered with a lid and sealed by a vacuum exhaust sealing machine made either by American Can Company or Continental Can. The sealed cans were run to a V shaped spread flat tray to facilitate loading of an iron heavy bealt strap can holder approximately four feet square that contained approximately 250 cans. These would be lifted by two men on each side and loaded onto a mini-railroad cartbase, and

when stacked with these retort trays approximately waist high they would be rolled into the steam retort. A full load would be cooked for 90 minutes under ten pounds of pressure per square inch. Each retort had a chart that gauged the steam pressure by time interval. Incidentally the boilers were fired by licensed firemen whose only responsibility was proper operation and they also blew the cannery whistle work call.

Retort workmen or cooker supervisors shut off the steam and opened the doors which were secured by pressure flanges. The cooked tray cart cans of salmon were then pulled out with long hooks. The trays were on a moving chain track which led to a waterbath. A leaky can could be detected by emission of bubbles and removed. The load was restacked on the trolley swivel wheel carts which were hauled by manpower to the labelling department not far from the site of the bath. Since the cannery floor was planked, a steel sheet roadway led to labelling for each of transport. Early day labelling was accomplished by hand and the finished product was boxed in wood or paper case cartons either 48 halves or 24 one pound cans. Union Fishermen had a can factory on the second deck. Sheet tin was stamped and the cans were formed with side and base cover. These open cans were guided by roller track overhead to the site of the packers. Eventually the can factory was phased out in late 20's or early 30's and custom cans made by manufacturers in Portland or Seattle were used.

Salmon salted in a wooden tierce or keg containing 800 pounds of fish cured by brine have been processed by the company since 1903. This was the primary method of preserving Columbia River salmon. It was the easiest way to take care of huge runs. Mild cure salmon was shipped to

Europe where it was later smoked, or served as Lox in New York markets, a true delicacy and very expensive.

Salmon tierces were manufactured by Patrick Kearney Co. in the vicinity of Scow Bay. Straight grain fir barrel staves were cut, and steam-boxed shaped. These were assembled on a jig and bound by galvanized steel hoops of flat iron. Later the barrels were made by Western Cooperage in Seattle. I imagine that the barrel staves were cut from one inch thick by four inches wide stock, 34-inches long. There was a very slight edge bevel. The ends had a groove cut leaving an approximately two inches narrower than the middle so in effect a barrel measured approximately four feet in the middle, tapered to 46 inches at the ends, had a tongue grooved cut to accommodate the end covers made of the same stock; the formed barrel measured perhaps 30 inches in depth.

I worked in the mild-cure department during the summers of 1936 through 1939. Victor Urell was chief. Robert Rahkonen, Albert Erickson, and William (Buddy) Larson completed the crew. At times William Urell gave a helping hand. He had his own operation in British Columbia and in Alaska.

Large size salmon 20 pounds and upward were selected from the daily fresh deliveries. Usually fifty to perhaps a hundred salmon were selected when available. Catches were not always plentiful. These fish were butchered with two exceptions the pectoral fin was left on the carcass as a collar handle and the tail was also kept. Then the salmon were placed in a conventional salmon box 42 inches long by 24 inches wide, and 16 inches deep. A bed of crushed ice was laid within, then the fish were set belly up in loose fit collar and tail with ice cover between sides and exposed belly flaps. Usually three

boxes of fish and ice were stored on box carriage rollers and these were left for the following day's procedure. This method firmed the flesh and made de-veining easier as no internal body wall skin damage was allowed.

The following morning was process time. The iced salmon were gently removed from the boxes and placed upon a long table. Mr. Urell was the splitter. He positioned the salmon belly flap toward his mid section, hooked the collar on a nail spike, made preliminary vent cuts on backbone, then started the long knife draw from the collar just between backbone and skin and drew the sharp edge backward. The upper half was separated with a faint backbone line on the body while still intact. The side was flipped on the skin side and slid forward on the wet table surface to the slimers. The exposed backbone was similarly removed. These were dropped in a box. Visitors and relatives of fishermen could, with permission, take the skeletal remains free for salmon chowder.

We slimers removed all traces of blood and skin secretions. The halves were gently lifted by the collar and immersed in a tank of ice water. After an immersion of several minutes the halves were then lifted onto a semi bowed cart with drainage crosswise spaces. Sides were always laid skin side down then they were wheeled to the salting area. We made our own brine by adding coarse ground salt into a vat and stirring same by hand with aid of an oar blade. When the brine was ready the vat was set on a platform overhead and brine was piped to the lower tank. All tierces were delivered with the top enclosed. It was opened by releasing the binding hoops, removing the top and securing the bands with a special coopers maul that has a V shaped edge with a slight ridge on both edges.

The Urell family sons Emil, Bill and Vic and Emil's boys Vernon and Russell were all top-notch mild-cure men. Emil and sons worked the coast from California to Alaska. Victor did all the salting too. This was a very special operation. If the sides were not laid into the tierce properly so that when filled with brine and it was not distributed uniformly throughout a tierce containing 800 pounds of salmon could spoil causing a tremendous business loss in dollars invested so it was the chief's sole responsibility. A mild-cure, salt laden buggy was used for the procedure. A board rested over the top. Vic Urell lifted it onto the board, pierced the skin side with a sharp blade star wheel penetrating the skin approximately one-half inch leaving a score mark the length of the fish. Generally three such rows depending upon size were made. This aided the brine penetration. Salt was sprinkled by hand, then laid into the barrel bottom on a slightly salted surface. This was done by grasping the collar and tail section for proper placement. The collar and skin side were positioned in a circle. Thus sides were laid — top back to body wall section of the first and so around the base of the tierce. Upon having filled the tierce almost to the top, the upper section had the skin side reversed as to form a similar protection from the cover lid. The lid tongue inserted into the released groove opening of the stave edge, and the top was then made secure by replacing the cooper bands. Tierces were stored at 33 degrees above 0 degrees F. The midsection bung opening was set upright and a funnel was placed therein. It was my first morning task to check the tierce line and keep the brine level full in the funnel.

After cure storage time of four to six weeks the contents of a salmon tierce were inspected. Generally this

was a time when a broker would come to inspect the quality of the pack. Bart Claghorn and Max Berg of Klevenhusen were men who did the inspecting. Tierces were rolled out into the salting area. They were opened and the sides of salted salmon were removed one by one. Any sign of yellowing was looked for. A slab would be cut, the flavor and texture sampled. Was it ever so good! The barrel was refilled and the top was replaced after more brine was added.

Shipment of a tierce full of salmon weighing a total of 1100 pounds was a problem in load engineering. Usually refrigerated railroad cars were the most common carrier. Often they were stacked two high. The bottom layer was a simple matter of rolling and tipping the tierce upright in a designated position. When there were no lift trucks, an incline plank road was set up and the tierce was rolled up this causeway by use of a harness hitched to double block tackle with manpower pulling and guidance rolling onto planks laid on the edges of the bottom tierces.

I remember salmon tierces being loaded onto European market bound vessels at the Port of Astoria. These were slung aboard by sister hooks attached to ends and steam operated ship winches into a refrigerated hold section. Seaborg Transfer Company's low flatbed truck made the deliveries from the cannery to the port. This same truck hauled many cases of canned salmon too. Usually the canned salmon pack was stored in the Taylor Street warehouse delivered there with a railroad type baggage wagon of years past.

We also processed frozen fish for market. Commercially caught summer Steelhead some weighing up to 20 pounds were a staple product for the frozen fish trade. A very good market was in Belgium and France.



A true artist photo of Uuno Koskela, brother to Eino, as he mended nets for Union Fish at the net racks. Uuno went on to become a member of the Board of Directors as seen in the picture on page 29. (Koskela Family Photo.)

They wanted their fish frozen in the round to that is the way it was sold. Steelhead were checked for pugh holes, brush cleaned in water and then laid on metal freeze plates on the ammonia carrying pipes. When frozen solid the fish were lifted off and placed into a steel rod rack holding perhaps 20 fish at a time. This rack was suspended over an ice cold water tank and lowered by crank. The fish were immersed in the bath and after a few minutes were lifted out. A coating of ice formed over the fish followed by the second dip. Then they were returned to freezing storage held at 10 degrees fahrenheit. After a few weeks the bath procedure was again applied. Prior to shipment order filling a third bath was carried out. Then the frozen fish were wrapped in large waterproof wax paper and placed in a wooden box that had been paper lined, the cover was nailed in the cold room and order stencil affixed. These were also shipped by refrigerated frozen storage railroad car or steamer. Russell Urell corroborated these statements.

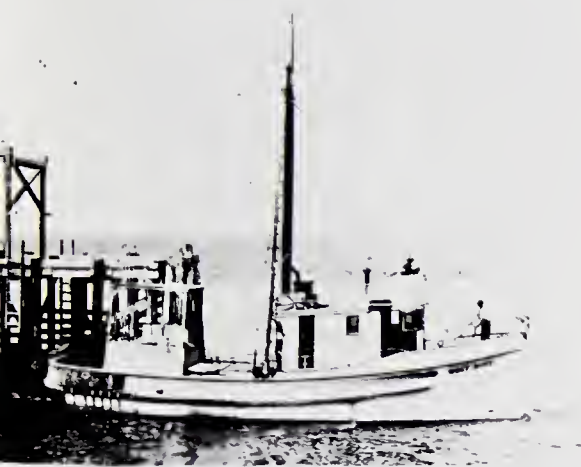
Eino "Lank" Koskela

Eino "Lank" Koskela worked for 49 years for The Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Association and the later owners, the last Barbey Company owned by Ted Bugas. On January 13, 1987, Eino Koskela was featured in an article in the Daily Astorian. Eino acquired his nickname of "Lank" when he was twelve and grown six feet tall and weighed 120 pounds. He started to work in 1931 at age 17 carrying trays filled with cans of fresh salmon to the fish grader. He was paid fifty-cents per hour. When the cannery closed for good in 1980 Koskela had worked his way through the ranks. He was made Supervisor in 1952 under Rolf Ostrom who was General Manager under owner Nick Bez.

Barbey Packing Corporation was among the last of Astoria's canneries to close, a victim of depleted salmon runs, and a consumer demand for frozen, not canned, fish. Bugas and Koskela said more than 30 canneries thrived in the Astoria area in 1887 when the town was known as "The Salmon Capital" of the World. By 1900 cans of Columbia River salmon imprinted with Union Fish labels "*Gillnetters Best*" and "*Cooperatives Best*" was sitting on the tables as far away as England, although most were sold in the United States.

The Cooperative remained a fishermen-owned business until the late 1940s when it was sold to Seattle fishing magnate Nick Bez. Koskela, meanwhile, was busy working his way through the ranks. In the span of about two decades, he had been promoted from tray carrier to fish grader, then into the maintenance department where he was the first welder and electrician, then to refrigeration and finally, to Supervisor of the entire plant in 1952. During that time he met and married Luella Morgan. Koskela whose parents immigrated from Finland, spoke his first language, Finnish, at the cannery because many employees had come from the "old country." Koskela notes with pride that his accent was so good his Finnish co-workers often asked him where he was born in Finland. The cannery, like others locally, also employed many Chinese laborers. According to an 1880 census, nearly one third of Clatsop County's 7,050 residents were Chinese, and most worked in the canneries. Koskela fondly remembers Chinese vegetable growers speaking Finnish as they went from door to door selling their goods.

By 1970, only seven or eight canneries remained in the Astoria area, but Union Fishermen's Cooperative, which by then had



The "Westwind" Leaving Cannery Station

become Barbey Packing Company, still had some life left in it. The cannery processed 127,000 pounds of shrimp daily at the peak of the season in the 70's and 288,000 cans daily of tuna and salmon, Koskela said. In less than a decade, however, the Barbey Cannery and the canning industry locally would be closed permanently. At age 66 Koskela was to retire after 49 years for Union Fishermen's Cooperative. Alaska is virtually the only place in the United States where commercial canneries exist.

I have been a personal friend with "Lank" since about 1925 when we attended Gray School. We both were involved in music in the school orchestra and he was director of a group of seven kid musicians known as the "Question Marks." We even played for programs and dances at Suomi Hall. Eino played violin and later became a trumpet player of solo lead caliber. I remember well the members of that band. There was Jorma Jouppila on the saxophone, Ed Niska - saxophone, John Roslyn - drums, Jeanette Thompson - piano, Taimi Palo - violin and Sylvia Turve - mandolin.

Lank and I were members of the Astoria City Band under James Lovatt, and later the Astoria Elk's

Band. Lank still plays with the North Coast Symphonic Band and is active with a local dance orchestra. He tells me that he was a "Jack of all trades but a master of none." This I find to be a gross understatement as many of our friends will readily acknowledge, "Lank" Koskela is possessive of a rare talent to bring out the best in anything he tries. I see the same quality in his boys Mike and Dennis, who are in business here.

Lank Koskela is also a talented film maker and his films on local industries are deposited in the archives of the Oregon Historical Society.

Addenda

Jenny Niemi translated the fifty year history of United Finnish Brotherhood Lodge No. 2, Astoria from the original Finnish to English. She records the following during the year 1913: Among the early Finn in Astoria there were several who possessed an inventive bent. These Finns made many improvements on machines used in the canning of fish. Erik Maunula developed several important improvements to the method of fish-cooking and also built the first cooling system which has since come into general use in the industry. Many other improvements in fish processing are the result of his inventive genius. A machine for leading lines used on nets was invented by a fisherman named Eb Maataja. Maunula made minor improvements to this invention also. This "leading machine" as it was called by local people, proved to be a very satisfactory devise for it enabled the fisherman to get the chore done at minimal expense. It is still the only one of its kind in general use. (Author's note: It is an iron mold devise in that line is wrapped in a predetermined back and forth layer with half-size net lead configurations, and a similar top plate is dropped

over same and molten lead is ladeled into the trough over the lead configuration and when full, allowed to harden which does not take long, then the line is unwound, and dropped into a sack and the process is continued.)

Another notable invention, also credited to a Finn, should be noted for posterity. At an early age, Franz Kankkonen had become thoroughly interested in the fishing industry. He possessed special qualifications and was the first General Manager. He realized the necessity of improving the method of sealing the cans of fish. Up to that time the process required hand labor and the use of acid and solder. Kankkonen wanted to develop an adhesive that would permit the sealing of a can by a machine. He experimented with various ingredients until he found a combination which proved satisfactory in every way. This invention was the only one of its kind and soon became well-known throughout the canning industry. For some time Kankkonen was the sole manufacturer of the product and operated his local plant continuously for many years. But the canning industry eventually found out the composition of the sealer, and it soon became evident that it was being produced elsewhere also, regardless of the patent rights held by Kankkonen. After his death the heirs continued to operate the plant for a few years, but after manufacture of the product became general throughout the industry the competition also became keen and the weaker had to succumb. The heirs became discouraged in the struggle and sold the entire business to a Seattle industrialist. Thus Astoria lost the benefits which stemmed from a significant Finnish invention.

Acknowledgements:

Sylvia Lundholm - Fifty Year History of Union

Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company 1896-1946.

Charles Hoell - Fifty Year History of Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company.

Frithioff Kankkonen - From the Fifty Year History

Jenny Niemi - The Fifty Year History of UFKB&S Astoria Lodge #2.

Joan Herman - Daily Astorian, January 13, 1987.

About the Author:

Edwin L. Niska born January 19, 1915 in Butte, Montana. Parents: Leonard Niska of Aavasakes and Mary Lauri, of Nuotioranta of Yli Tornio (Dever Tornio) Finland. Emigrants of Hancock, Michigan: Mother - 1900; Father 1905. Married in Butte, Montana, June 4, 1912. Occupations: Father, Miner, Carpentry, Fisherman; Mother: Domestic, Cook, Professional Cook. Resident: Astoria; Father, 1917; Mother and son, Edwin, 1918.

Edwin Niska: Education: Taylor School 1921-1925; Robert Gray, 1925-1929; Astoria High School 1930-1933; University of Washington, BS in Fisheries, 1940; Handels - Hochschule 1947-1948, St. Gallen, Switzerland, Business and Foreign Trade, 86 credits. Married: Alice Gustafson Patenaude. Daughter, Kathleen Stoltz, Sons: Ernest, Joseph; Daughter Grace K. Niska Atkins, prior marriage.

Professional Record: Fish Biologist Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 22 years; 1940-43, 1953-54, 1960-79 Sardine and Tuna Research, Salmon studies, Offshore oil explorations, Groundfish and Trawl Investigations and Management studies including Shrimp.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations, University of Hawaii, Tropical tuna research explorations 1951-1953.

Korea Technical Institute, Seoul, Korea 1950; Teacher reassigned ECA Washington, D.C. Consultant.

Professional Societies: Pacific Fishery Biologists, American Fisheries Society, The American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists.

Fraternal Societies: United Finnish Kaleva Brothers and Sisters, Astoria Lodge No. 2; Officer, President 6 terms; Fifty year pin. UFKB&S Grand Lodge, Vice President 1986-88; Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity - Life Member; B.P.O.E. Astoria Lodge 180 Life Member 38 Years.

Military Service: 1943-46 Staff Sergeant, AUS, ZI and ETO Certificate Technician Specialist, Maritime, 2nd Mate WO (Temp) AUS Ship Master 337 Harbor Craft Co. Transportation Corps, operating vessels in England and France. Chief Clerk, Inland Waterways Division HQ, Linz, Austria. Assisted in Liaison capacity to Danube shipping officials and personnel and served as German language interpreter.



Our own historical monument shown in the days of its majestic beauty, today calls for our help of restoration. On its surface a living history of Clatsop County's very beginning unfolds in 125 feet of Italian fresco art. Many of us watched with pride at its erection and followed the progress of the artist at work high above us on a scaffold, seeming to climb to the clouds above.

We want our heritage preserved for all visitors to our historical area to enjoy with us. Remember our Astoria Column and share in its restoration.

Clatsop County Historical Society
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